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New Role Model for 21st Century Republicans?

RNC Chairman Hails Israeli Hatemonger as Hero for Grand Old Party

By Michael Collins Piper

There's a new brand of Republicanism, at least according to Ken Mehlman, whom President George W. Bush personally hand picked following the 2004 election, to serve as chairman of the Republican National Committee.

In a March 14 speech in Washington to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the lobby for Israel, the GOP's national chairman candidly and enthusiastically described himself as a "Sharansky Republican." This, of course, refers to Israeli cabinet minister Natan Sharansky, who — along with a host of his American neoconservative allies — is known to have played a major role in crafting President Bush's much-ballyhooed (and widely criticized) second inaugural address calling for a world-wide democratic revolution.

What is so striking is that this appears to be the first time in American history that the chairman of one of the national party committees has used the name and ideology of a
political leader from a foreign nation — and one known as an "extremist" at that — to describe his own ideology.

In the past, there were self-described "Taft Republicans," who supported the presidential ambitions of the nationalistic and traditionally conservative Sen. Robert Taft of Ohio — popularly known as "Mr. Republican." Taft was the undisputed leader of the America First bloc in Congress from 1936 until his untimely (and some say "suspicious") death in 1953.

Later, there were the conservative "Goldwater Republicans" who — under the leadership of Sen. Barry Goldwater (Ariz.) — set the stage for the ascendancy of the "Reagan Republicans" who came to power in 1980 under the popular two-term president, Ronald Reagan.

At the same time, in opposition to the Taft and Goldwater Republicans, there were the more liberal and internationalist-minded Republicans who rallied behind New York Gov. Thomas E. Dewey and Wall Street lawyer Wendell Willkie, dubbing themselves — naturally — as "Dewey Republicans" and "Willkie Republicans." And later, of course, many of those same party leaders evolved into "Rockefeller Republicans" following New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller.

And there were even a few folks, for a time, who called themselves "Eisenhower Republicans," stressing their so-called "mainstream, moderate" point of view (however defined) in the spirit of America's 35th president, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Now, however, the new GOP national chairman is not even calling himself a "Reagan Republican" or even a "Bush Republican," after the reigning GOP president who is wildly popular among grass-roots members of his party. But, instead, Mehlman is hailing a foreign extremist as the role model for what 21st century Republicanism is all about.

Four photographs. Caption describing them:
REPUBLICAN REVOLUTION: The Republican Party's new national chairman, Ken Mehlman (left), has proclaimed Sharansky Republicanism as his party philosophy, honoring a foreign political figure, Israeli extremist, Natan Sharansky (left, center). Most traditional American Republicans prefer to honor American Republican legends and call themselves "Taft Republicans" after the late Sen. Bob Taft (Ohio) or even "Reagan Republicans" after the wildly popular former two-term president, Ronald Reagan, who was — unlike Sharansky — an American.

A journalist specializing in media critique, Michael Collins Piper is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem***, ***The Judas Goats***, and ***Dirty Secrets***, all available from America First Books and First Amendment Books. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.